

Three Flowers in a Vase
By Jonathan Hardin

TIME: Present

CHARACTERS:

Dr. Terry Wilde – A woman.

Ken Vail – A fractured man.

Ken One – A young man, 18-20

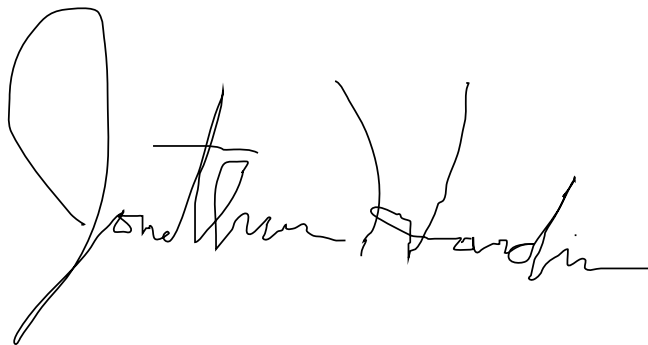
Ken Two – A boy, 8-10/13

Ken Three – A father, 30

Ken Four – A man.

SET NOTES:

For scenes not in the office, the upstage center platform is the only necessary piece. Can otherwise be bare or designed as desired.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Hardin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

[Begin Excerpt]

THREE: ...I don't know what you mean.

WILDE: You know exactly what I mean.

THREE: ...You know nothing.

WILDE: But I do, Ken.

THREE: Do you? Do you really know? ...Do you have a son? A daughter?

WILDE: Ken, I –

THREE: Do you?

WILDE: ...A son.

THREE: I see. ...Imagine your son is six years old. Imagine a nice enough day, pleasant weather. The weekend, so your son doesn't have school today. Imagine that you're late for work. Your alarm clock didn't go off, so you're not even just a little late. You're very late. You're racing to get dressed, forgoing the luxuries of a shower and brushing your teeth. You spray on extra deodorant and hope no one will notice. You sprint down the stairs and out the door, cursing your spouse and technology for your predicament. You rush out to the car in the driveway and glance only briefly for obstacles. You throw yourself and your briefcase in the car, turn the keys, jerk it into reverse, and hit the accelerator.

(Beat)

Now imagine that your son is playing in the yard. He left his toy in the driveway, and runs to get it before it gets run over. ...Only you didn't see him, and he didn't know you were in a hurry.

WILDE: ...Ken, you can't blame yourself.

THREE: You don't tell me what I can't do. I *know* what I can't do. I can't turn back the clock. I can't get him back. I can't look at myself in the mirror anymore. I know my wife can't look at me either, so she left. I can't get her back, even if I wanted to. I can't hold a job, can't keep a home, can't take

care of myself, can't sleep, can't live my life. But one thing that I *can* for *damn* sure do is blame myself. Because it's my fault.

WILDE: It was an accident.

THREE: An accident? An accident is what happens when you spill ink on your paper. Or mix colors and whites in the wash. ...This is murder.

ONE: Murder.

TWO: Murder.

WILDE: You're not a murderer Ken.

THREE: Aren't I? Earlier I told you to imagine, Doc. I'm not sure it worked. Fine, let's try something else, Doc. ...*Remember*. Remember your child. Remember what you feel for him. Remember the absolute, unconditional love for your son. Your son, who you would do anything for. Your son, who you love and cherish above all things in this world.

(Beat)

Now try to imagine that he is *dead*. By your own hand. You killed the reason you are living. Your son. ...If that's not *murder*... then a crime by that name doesn't exist.

WILDE: Ken, murder is not born of innocence. Murder is only a crime of purpose. You didn't mean to do what you did, so you're not a murderer.

THREE: Didn't I?

WILDE: ...What?

TWO: What if –

ONE: What if –

THREE: What if I really did mean it? *(Lights on KEN TWO flicker and dim.)* If I really loved him as much as I did, I wouldn't have killed him.

WILDE: Ken, it's not your fault.

ONE: But –

THREE: But he's dead. (*Lights on KEN ONE flicker and dim.*) If I really loved him, I would have checked behind the car, or said goodbye to him before I left.

WILDE: It was an accident, Ken, there's nothing you could have done!

THREE: Maybe I never loved him at all. (*Lights on KEN THREE flicker and dim.*)

WILDE: KEN!

(*All lights flicker for a moment. Blackout.*)

[End Excerpt]